

Within the Federal Government ... some official information and material, ... bear[ing] directly on the effectiveness of our national defense and the conduct of our foreign relations, must be subject to some constraints for the security of our Nation and the safety of our people and our allies. ... it is essential that such official information and material be given only limited dissemination. This official information or material, referred to as classified information or material ... [is to be] protected, but only to the extent and for such period as is necessary....

Classification	TOP SECRET	SECRET	CONFIDENTIAL
Degree of Protection	Highest	Substantial	[Unspecified]
Test: Unauthorized disclosure could reasonably be expected to cause:	Exceptionally <u>grave</u> damage to the national security.	<u>Serious</u> damage to the national security.	Damage to the national security.
Examples	<u>Armed hostilities</u> against the US or its allies. Disrupt foreign relations <u>vital</u> affecting the national security. Compromise <u>vital</u> national defense plans or complex cryptologic and communications intelligence systems. Reveal <u>sensitive</u> intelligence operations. Disclose scientific or technological developments <u>vital</u> to the national security.	<u>Significantly</u> impair a program or policy directly related to the national security. Disrupt foreign relations <u>significantly</u> affecting the national security. Reveal <u>significant</u> military plans. Reveal [<u>significant</u>] intelligence operations. Compromise <u>significant</u> scientific or technological developments relating to the national security.	[Unspecified]
Degree of Use	With utmost restraint	Sparingly	[Unspecified]